

The Brethren Evangelist

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AT
The Brethren Publishing House,
ASHLAND, OHIO.

Terms of Subscription.

One Copy one year, \$1.50
One Copy six months, .75
One Copy four months, .50

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THE BRETHREN PUB. HOUSE,
ASHLAND, Ashland Co., OHIO.

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ASHLAND, O., JULY 14, 1886.

Our Cause.

In the development of any new system or organization, there are always reverses, and progress is not made as rapidly as the zealous heart desires. Where there is zeal there is usually a stimulation of hope and the expected progress is often larger than the actual realized when the time arrives.

Reverses seem to be a necessary accompaniment of every movement designed to counteract or destroy sin, because conflicting interests are matched against each other in a contest for victory. Sin has its interests as well as any thing else and they will be defended as all other interests are; and as it is so frequently associated with personal concerns, when it is opposed, it is virtually opposition against an individual person. This makes fighting against sin a bitter contest, let it be in whatever field it may.

Our cause is one which arouses opposition wherever it is presented. Not only is the general religious rank against us, but those who are with us in doctrine oppose us because we oppose their customs.

Notwithstanding all opposition, our work continues to progress, and like the advance in the field of invention, the results will astonish the laborers a few years hence. The lessons of toil and sacrifice that are now being taught, will make those receiving them masters of every situation, and then, a little effort will have great effect, while now great effort is required to bring about little effect. A good cause well supported is like multiplying a number by itself and the product again and again.

The accessions to the Brethren Church, this year will number about thousand persons. The coming year the number will greatly increase, through the work of new stations and mission efforts and the labor of new workers in the field.

The most encouraging indication of all is that the community, where we have congregations, looking up on our church as an established religious organization, and accessions thereto are regular and without the excitement and pressure of special revival service. Under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and meditation in silence, people decide to obey Christ, and almost press into the kingdom. This is what a Church of Jesus Christ should be. Special revivals are often instrumental in bringing

about grand results; but there should be a continuous revival in the church of Jesus Christ; sinners should be constantly seeking its portals to shield themselves from the influence of sin and to secure the consolation of heart that will give rest to the soul and dispel the fears of approaching death. This desirable feature of our church work should be nourished and encouraged. Where a church is established, the aim should be to enlarge its membership and influence by constant growth, rather than by the special revival efforts, which, in religion, are what hot-houses are to vegetation. Human heat will often warm dead souls into life, and make spiritual germination and growth possible, but when the Sun of Righteousness, alone, shines into the heart, the growth is more natural and the abnormal influences of artificial warmth need not be outgrown before a substantial plant, in the Father's Kingdom, is the result. Therefore special revivals are good, but the constant revival is better.

There are a number of such churches in the Brotherhood now; notably, the churches at Waterloo, Iowa, in Bro. Mason's charge, at Milford and North Manchester, Ind., several in Pennsylvania and Virginia, and others that we leave unnamed.

Another feature of promise is that our people have come to a realization of just what we are and where we are. Those who had self and the dollar foremost in their minds have learned, in a measure, where their true place is and that the Brethren Church can offer no money bribe to induce men to be members in its body and laborers in its ministerial ranks. As a brother in Iowa once said, those who want something better should be willing to sacrifice—in his own language: I wanted something better, and I am willing to pay for it."

Sacrifice is a great purifier and it should be maintained as a wholesome exercise among the clergy of our church; and to this sacrifice on the part of the general membership should be inaugurated and encouraged. This is being done. Our Church has done more in the few years of its existence for the glorious Cause, than the "Mother Church" did during half of her life. The real work done is not apparent. The foundation is laid, and while that is a great portion of any work, it does not appear much in the way of an exhibit.

Our future is a promising one, and therefore hope is not an illusion, when it sees, in the future a great and zealous religious people bearing the honorable name of

"The Brethren."

Who are the Church Fathers.

In the field of controversy, the Church Fathers are frequently called up to give testimony. When they favor a favorite doctrine or position, they are honored, but when the views that they have put on record are contrary, then they are set aside as of slight importance and largely unchristian in their views.

At other times "The Fathers" are made to include a throng of ecclesiastics that the custom of scholars do not accept as such,

and when this claim is set up, it should be repudiated instead of repudiating the Fathers as competent witnesses on questions of doctrine.

But in all cases their views upon questions of Christian doctrine should be accepted as those of any other persons, and their judgment can not be confided in. They were not inspired men, and they judged, decided and wrote as we write, quoting the Scriptures as we quote them, and drawing conclusions as we draw them—according to our own decisions, influenced by surroundings, tendencies and the volume of knowledge that may be at hand to apply on the subject considered.

The great value of their productions as authors is their vindication of the scripture; for it is by their writing that we are able to prove the existence and authenticity of the scriptures up to the age of the Apostles.

The following is a list of the Church Fathers:

Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, Polycarp, these were contemporaries of the Apostles. Papius, died or flourished about 116 A. D.; Justin Martyr, 140; Dionysius of Corinth, 170; Tatian, 172; Hegesippus, 173; Melito, 177; Irenaeus, 178; Athenagoras, 178; Miltiades, 180; Theophilus, 181; Clement of Alexandria, 194; Tertullian, 200; Minutius Felix, 210; Ammonius, 220; Origin, 230; Firmilian, 233; Hippolytus, 238; Dionysius of Alexandria, 247; Cyprian, 248; Novatian, 251; Arnobius, 306; Lactantius, 306; Methodius, 312; Alexander of Alexandria, 313; Eusebius, 315; Athanasius, 326; Cyril of Jerusalem, 348; Hilary, 354; Epiphanius, 368; Basil, 370; Gregory of Nazianzen, 390; Gregory of Nyssa, 370; Optatus, 370; Ambrose, 374; Philaster, 380; Jerome, 392; Theodore of Mopsuestia, 398; Sulpitius Severus, 401; Cyril of Alexandria, 412; Theodoret, 423; and Gennadius, 494.

Those men wrote in defense of the Christian doctrine, and, in as much as many of them suffered martyrdom, it must be conceded that they were honest at heart, and devoted to their profession or they would not have given their lives rather than forsake the faith in Christ that they cherished.

To these writers belong the honorable title of Church Fathers, and the devotion that they manifested and the sacrifice that they made, should, at least, entitle their names to respect, if the doctrines they believed and advocated are not what they should be in every respect.

Glorying in Infirmities.

One of the practices of the Apostle Paul was to talk of his infirmities. He said of himself that he gloried in his infirmities. This is a habit that he seemed to encourage rather than condemn; and another scripture commands the similar custom of confessing faults to one another.

A short time ago a story was printed that a certain visitor was the guest of a man who kept in his cellar wines of various qualities. He gave his guest a glass of inferior wine, and its qualities were highly praised. He then brought a quantity of the best wine he had and the guest drank that and said not a word. This made the host curious and he in-

quired of his guest why he praised the inferior wine so much while he said nothing about the very excellent wine that he drank last. He replied, that the first needed praise, but the last was so good that it did not need any.

As much is true of a Christian's good qualities. They need no praise; they are all right without being talked about, when self is the subject of conversation. Infirmities, however, need attention, and the person who will talk about his infirmities and failing is under conviction, and at least, wishes he was different from what he is, and does not forget that he is not perfect in the sight of God and man.

When a person begins to talk to a friend or guest about his defects and failings, it seems to be humiliating to him, and the story is either patiently endured, or he is given to understand that such conversation is not entertaining. Yet, judged from an impartial premise, it is just as honorable for a person to talk about his failings as it is to talk about his wondrous works, his success and his superior abilities, and the scriptures make it more Christian.

Self, at appropriate times, is a proper subject of conversation, and the most important study that can engage the mind. The person who forgets self altogether as a subject needing correction, advice and direction, is blind and bigoted. No one is perfect, and infirmities should engage the attention as earnestly, with a view of improvement, as any other subject.

It is a scriptural practice, to talk about personal infirmities, yet there is very little of it done. It is important to keep the proper equilibrium between man and man. It is no great honor to any man, if nature gave him a body with which he can lift a weight twice as heavy as some other man can lift. He only received what he has. As much is true of ability.

Because Peter had power to heal the sick and raise the dead, which was given him by God, yet he was worthy of no honor individually; and when men fell before him he raised them up and admonished them in the statement that he was only a man also.

So, instead of allowing admirers to laud him to the skies, the great man should glory in his infirmities, and set a good example and admonishes his followers by making prominent the fact that he is not perfect, has his short comings as all men have, and subject to the same temptations and liable to fall as all men are.

When others glory in your fame, then glory in your infirmities.

NOTES AND NEWS.

Bro. Isaac Kilhefner preached at the College Sunday.

The Brethren Tract Society is pushing its work with commendable enterprise.

Bro. R. Z. Replogle announces that he is ready to fill calls for revival services.

Bro. E. Mason has the pencil at work again, and "copy" in bundles is the result.

Bro. David Bailey has another lay sermon in the drawer for the readers of the EVANGELIST.

A new volume of the *Home Pulpit* will be commenced with the July number, and will contain several interesting articles.

Bro. A. A. Cober is at home again and at work as usual. We rather feel slighted here at Ashland as we expected he would give us a visit.

Ministers of churches will please remember that we are anxious to have a report from all of the churches at an early day. Do not forget this.

We are ready at any time to receive subscriptions to the EVANGELIST. Do not forget this and have the paper sent to those who are not taking it.

Miss Sue Rumbaugh, one of the teachers, at the College has returned from her visit since the close of school, and is preparing for the work of the coming year.

Bro. E. L. Hildebrand who was preaching in brother Cober's place during his visit, is now on his way to Iowa, and we expect to hear from him at other points soon.

Will the brother who sends us an obituary under the title of Brush Valley, send us his post office address; also, state what church the sister belonged to and her place of residence?

The recent announcement of the proposed union with the Brethren in Christ has occasioned many inquiries about them. It would be satisfactory to know more concerning them.

These are quiet times in the line of church news for us. We must depend upon our readers for such matter, and we urge upon all not to forget to send in any item of interest that may be observed.

It is with sadness that we learn that Bro. E. L. Yoder's wife is not recovering her health. She is afflicted with consumption, and has greatly wasted away. Bro. Yoder and the remainder of the family have fair health.

In Ohio wheat harvest is almost a work of the past for this year. Improved machinery shortens the work wonderfully, and farmers ought to have much time to devote to literary pursuits. The crop is a fair one for Ohio, and there is reason to be thankful to the Giver of all good.

There is no time so favorable to gain an advantage in a new country in church work as to be the first to organize a church. There are several localities in the West where there are several families of Brethren and no church. A class ought to be organized at once in such places, and the work commenced.

Leaders in the Campbellite or Christian Church, and the Baptists, have been agitating the subject of a union for some time. There is very little difference in these churches, but yet there is little progress made toward a union. No one can tell why they do not unite, and few have any reasons to give why they should not unite.

The army of temperance workers is receiving accessions from all parts of the country and the war against the saloon is becoming greater and grander day by day. Prohibition, by a late law